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EDU

Catholic school fires teacher over LGBT support

BY NEGASSI TESFAMICHAEL

Name redacted
[redacted] was excited to start her new job as a second-grade teacher at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School this fall. But now she's out of a job after posting LGBT pride-related content on her Facebook profile.

"I was definitely dumbstruck. I was in shock and I couldn't believe that this is what happened," [redacted], who has been teaching since early 2017, said in an interview. "It had nothing to do with my teaching. It had nothing to do with how I am as a teacher and that's what should come first. I'm a teacher first."

The issues began after Principal Callie Meiller reached out to [redacted] last Friday saying she had seen some photos on the teacher's Facebook profile that included profile photo frames with rainbows and other pride-related content.

Worried that parents at the school would see the content, Meiller asked [redacted] to take down the photos. [redacted] agreed to do so.

[redacted] also agreed to take off a bumper sticker on her car that said "America needs nasty women," after a nun at the school confronted her about it on Sunday while unloading materials from her car to prepare the second-grade classroom for the school year.

"If you want to work here you need to be a holy woman," [redacted] said the nun told her.

While the bumper sticker wasn't

specifically mentioned when her contract got revoked, the principal told [redacted] that the nun felt offended and that the parish's pastor, Rev. Chad Droessler, didn't feel like she should be part of the community based off of the Facebook posts despite them being taken down.

"I said I am in support of LGBT rights," [redacted] said. "I won't deny that."

[redacted], who is working at a summer camp program currently and already resigned from previous positions to take on the new job at Immaculate Heart of Mary, isn't sure what she'll do next now that she lost her teaching position before it started.

"I agreed to take down the posts in order to conform with the values at the school, which are values I share and I was open about that. I told them I was willing to take my bumper sticker off and they were still not okay with it," [redacted] said. "I just felt shocked and disappointed that this is what a school in the Madison area would do."

Meiller and Droessler did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Founded in 1954, Immaculate Heart of Mary serves over 175 students, according to the school's website.

"Parents look to us to accept and nurture the best in their children, preparing them to walk with Christ along life's path with a firm foundation to freely make good choices," its mission statement reads. 